

Citizen Involvement

Mr. DiCaprio. Now, I'm sure you've heard so many reports from scientists and politicians and citizens. What do you think the best course for American citizens is within the next 20 years as far as helping the environment is concerned?

The President. Well, the biggest global problem by far on the environment is global warming. The biggest problem in many developing countries right now is safe water. We still have huge numbers of children dying from diarrhea and other related diseases and problems because they don't have safe water. And there are local air pollution problems that are horrible in various places.

But internationally, the biggest problem is global warming. And I think the most important thing we can do is, every citizen must first understand that he or she can do something about this, and it won't bankrupt them. They should have their homes, their cars, their businesses, everything they do should be oriented toward energy efficiency and alternative energy technologies. And then they should make this one of the issues that has to be discussed by public officials running for office at every level. This has to become not just an issue that we talk about once a year on Earth Day but an issue that is debated along with health care and education and national security and other issues at every election.

You know, I was fortunate when I asked Vice President Gore to join me in 1992 that he had written a book on this, that he was interested in it. He talked to me about it. And so we just, on our own initiative, have done a lot of these things. But we could have had a whole environmental agenda and not dealt with this really very much. And then we had Kyoto, which we strongly supported, the Kyoto Protocol. But this needs to become an issue for every public official. It needs to become a matter of citizen debate.

So I think citizen action, and then citizens as voters turning it into a political issue, in the very finest sense—those are the things that I think need to be done right now and for the next several years to get America on the right track.

Mr. DiCaprio. Do you think we can eventually become a role model?

The President. Absolutely. We should become a role model because, just as we've led the world in information technology with the development of the Internet and digital technology of all kinds, we have the technology here. And there's no excuse for not implementing it comprehensively and quickly in every American community. And there's no excuse for not making it available at an affordable price to every American family.

So if we take this on the way we did the Industrial Revolution, the way we did the information technology revolution, there will be an energy revolution in the 21st century that will save the planet and actually increase health and wealth. That will be one—I predict to you that will be one of the great stories of the 21st century, that there was a dramatic revolution in work caused by a change in the source of energy, in the level of conservation, and in the availability of technologies that just weren't there before.

Mr. DiCaprio. I hope so. Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at approximately 1 p.m. on the Oval Office Patio at the White House for broadcast on the evening of April 22. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 23. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll

April 24, 2000

Thank you very much, and good morning. I'm so glad to see such a wonderful crowd all over the South Lawn, all the way back to the back. I want to also say, as Hillary did, that even though this is our last White House Easter egg roll, and we will miss it very much, we have enjoyed it.

Today Melinda Bates, the Director of our Visitors Office, who's done so much on this over the years, told me that Hillary and I are the only First Couple ever to do this all 8 years we were here. And I think it's because we had more fun than the children did here.

I just want to thank those of you who have had anything to do with this Easter egg roll.

I want to thank especially the 500 volunteers. And I'd like to say that this is the first time we've ever broadcast the Easter egg roll in cyberspace, so there will be more children in classrooms and homes and libraries across America watching this Easter egg roll today than have attended it in the previous 122 years of the White House Easter egg roll, thanks to the Internet. And we are delighted that that is so, as well.

I want to just reemphasize one thing that Hillary said. This year's activities feature reading. And they feature the theory that it is fun. It's a part of our prescription for learning initiative that the First Lady launched 3 years ago, with the help of Scholastic Books. They bring together health care professionals, librarians, and others to show children how important and fun reading can be.

So I hope you enjoy that, along with the storytelling booths, the egg decorating. There are even some costume characters around here, appearing as some of our greatest Presidents. I hope you recognize them.

Finally, let me say it's time to blow the whistle to start another Easter egg roll. And before I do, I want to thank our Master of Ceremonies, Bernie Fairbanks, and ask him to come up here. He's right behind me.

And I want you to know something about this man. As nearly as I can figure, he's been here for almost half of the Easter egg rolls. He has joined me every year, but he's been attending the Easter egg roll since Franklin Roosevelt was the President of the United States.

So before I start this, Bernie, I want to give you a special Easter egg roll 2000 whistle with your name on it, for Hillary and me, thanks for the 8 years we shared with you. And now that you're, once again, going to have seniority over us, I want you to think of us when you blow this whistle.

Thank you. So we're going to do this together, right? I want you to do it with me. Now where are they—are they ready over there? Wave your hand if you're ready. All right.

On your mark, get set —

[At this point, the whistle blew starting the White House Easter egg roll.]

NOTE: The President spoke approximately 10:27 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Michael P. Forbes in New York City

April 24, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first, I want to thank Bill and Nancy for having us in their beautiful apartment. I must say, they've been so wonderful to Hillary and me. I'm going to forgive them because they stripped me of one of my important legacies today.

I felt a little awkward standing up here on these beautiful stairs. And now people will never be able to say what one man came up to me and said when I was out in the West recently. He said, "I'll tell you one thing, Bill, they will never say that when you were President you looked down on the American people." *[Laughter]*

But I actually enjoyed it up there. I could see everyone's face. I was thinking how proud I am to be here and to be here with you.

I want to thank Congressmen Nadler, Towns, and Ackerman for being here. And, Gary, thank you for rounding out the funds race today. That was a—*[laughter]*. Gary Ackerman just went to India with me. I heard how many people lived in India—over 900 million people. Do you know every third person I met knew who Gary Ackerman was? *[Laughter]* It was very disorienting. It was utterly amazing.

Let me say, these three people have really represented not only New York but the United States very well. And you can be proud of them. Jerry Nadler is everyone's conscience, including mine when he thinks I'm straying too far. Ed Towns was with me in 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. *[Laughter]* So I really like them very, very much.

I want to welcome again Mike and Barbara and Abby—who is going to be a teacher, by the way. She's a senior at the University of Virginia, and she's going to be a teacher. We ought to give her a hand. *[Applause]*